I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 68/238, recognized the special challenges and needs of small island developing States, many of which are not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

2. The same resolution also reaffirmed the commitment to take urgent and concrete action to address the vulnerability of small island developing States, including through the sustained implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[1] and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[2] and underlined the urgency of finding additional solutions to the major challenges facing small island developing States in a concerted manner so as to support them in sustaining the momentum realized in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy and achieving sustainable development.

3. In its resolution 68/238, in follow-up to its resolution 67/207 in which it reaffirmed the decision to convene in 2014 the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the General Assembly decided on the modalities for the preparatory process for the Conference and on the modalities for the Conference, including reaffirming its decision that the Conference would result in a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented political document; decided to establish the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee and decided on the organization of the meetings of the Preparatory Committee; and requested the Secretary-General to provide all appropriate support to the work of the intergovernmental committee process of the Conference and to the Conference itself and to ensure inter-agency cooperation and effective participation and coherence within the United Nations system, as well as the efficient use of resources, so that the objectives of the Conference could be addressed.

4. The present report outlines the progress made towards furthering the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/238. The relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, as well as regional intergovernmental organizations of small island developing States, major groups and Member States were consulted in its preparation.[3]

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[1] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] Inputs were received from the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Commonwealth and the Governments of Japan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand and the Russian Federation.

From the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States

Identification of the objectives of the Conference during the preparatory process

5. During the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, the international community noted the continued challenges that small island developing States faced as a result of their special circumstances and of their difficulties in implementing the Mauritius Strategy.

6. In response to those challenges, in its outcome document, entitled "The future we want", the Conference called for "the convening in 2014 of a third international conference on small island developing States, recognizing the importance of coordinated, balanced and integrated actions to address the sustainable development challenges facing small island developing States" (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 180).

7. Following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions outlining the modalities for the preparatory process and for the Conference (see resolutions 67/207 and 68/238), in which it was decided that:

(a) The Conference would (i) assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, building on, inter alia, existing reports and relevant processes; (ii) seek a renewed political commitment by all countries to address effectively the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, inter alia, through mobilization of resources and assistance for small island developing States; (iii) identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of small island developing States and ways and means to address them, including through the strengthening of collaborative partnerships between small island developing States and the international community; and (iv) identify priorities for the sustainable development of small island developing States for consideration, as appropriate, in the elaboration of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda (see resolution 67/207);

(b) The overarching theme of the Conference would be "The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships", and that the Conference should serve as a forum to build on existing successful partnerships and to launch innovative and concrete new ones to advance the sustainable development of small island developing States (see resolution 68/238).

8. The Government of Samoa extended an offer to host the Conference, and the preparatory process has been guided by the mandates of General Assembly resolutions 67/207 and 68/238. Regional, interregional and global preparatory meetings were held in preparation for the Conference, which will be held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014.

9. The Conference will usher in the next stage of the follow up to and implementation of the sustainable development strategies of small island developing States.

Identification of priorities for the small island developing States at the regional and interregional levels

10. At the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the outcome document of the interregional preparatory meeting for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, entitled "Small islands developing States integrated and enabling cooperation framework for the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation", which was adopted by small island developing States and highlighted their priorities following regional and interregional consultations, was circulated as a document of the Second Committee (see A/C.2/68/7, annex II).

11. The priorities highlighted by the small island developing States for both the outcome of the third International Conference and the post-2015 development agenda included:

(a) The need to establish a global enabling environment inclusive of national and regional dimensions that takes into consideration the need for the full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the outcome of the third International Conference;

(b) Issues specific to the small island developing States, given their unique and persistent structural vulnerabilities;

(c) The need for eradicating poverty, engendering equality and achieving environmental sustainability;

(d) The need to balance the use of land for agriculture, food and water security, and economic and social development, with the need for ecosystem conservation and biodiversity preservation;

(e) The critical need to address the emerging health crisis represented by non-communicable diseases;

(f) Continued commitment to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns, including through the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns and support for the small island developing States in that regard;

(g) The elaboration of appropriate indices that better reflect the vulnerability of small island developing States and guide them to adopt more informed policies and strategies for building and sustaining long-term resilience;

(h) The establishment of a robust global monitoring system that would strengthen accountability at all levels and ensure adequate and timely analysis of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, as well as the outcome of the third International Conference;

(i) Dedicated support for the ongoing processes in follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, in particular the Open Working Group on

Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing;

(j) Climate change as a cross-cutting issue, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities;

(k) Healthy, productive and resilient oceans.

12. The priority areas requiring attention included climate change, including sea level rise and ocean acidification; declining official development assistance and access to funding and financial institutions; gender equality and women's empowerment; communicable and non-communicable diseases; unemployment; preservation of cultural heritage and practices; sustainable tourism; sustainable consumption and production; peace, security and stability; food security; green economy; information and communication technologies; biodiversity; waste and chemical management; social development; forests; sustainable energy; disaster risk reduction; and oceans and seas.

13. In order to address the challenges and utilize the opportunities, enabling factors identified by the small island developing States were financing; capacity-building; technology transfer; data collection and management; partnerships and technical cooperation; and institutional support.

Evolution of the partnership theme of the Conference

14. The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development underscored that sustainable development requires concrete and urgent action, highlighting that it can only be achieved with a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and the private sector, all working together to secure the future we want for present and future generations. The broad alliance mentioned in the outcome document is a sine qua non if small island developing States are to reach their sustainable development aspirations. In this regard the participation and strong support of small island developing States and their development partners are paramount.

15. During the regional and interregional preparatory meetings for the third International Conference, the partnership theme gained even more prominence as a key element in the further sustainable development of small island developing States. As stated in the outcome document of the interregional preparatory meeting (see A/C.2/68/7, annex II, para. 4):

> There is a need for partners to assist small island developing States in the pursuit of their goals in relation to sustainable development. The overarching theme of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States will be "Sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships.

The General Assembly endorsed the theme for the Conference in its resolution 68/238.

II. Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy

16. The majority of activities at the international level relating to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, over the past year, has been focused on the third International Conference. However, there have been other activities geared towards the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

17. During the preparatory process for the third International Conference,[4] countries called for the full implementation of commitments and a transformational strategy to bridge national sustainable development priorities and the global development agenda. Countries also called for the creation of institutional mechanisms to facilitate inter- and intraregional collaboration for the implementation of initiatives that have been proposed in the past but not yet implemented.

A. Ongoing efforts of Member States from among the small island developing States

18. Efforts for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy have been made at the national level by Member States from along the small island developing States, through the development of national sustainable development plans and strategies and the strengthening of institutions to address priority areas.

19. For example, in Guyana, the Low Carbon Development Strategy update launched in 2013 specifically addresses, among other issues, clean energy production and sustainable forest management.

20. Palau is the first island nation to begin work on a project for developing climate and disaster resilience plans for national broadcasters through a course on emergency management for the media, which was completed in June 2014. The training is part of an initiative funded by the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

21. Tonga, in partnership with the World Bank, among others, is implementing a 10-year energy road map, the launch of which was announced in September 2013. The road map puts the government of Tonga in charge of managing multiple donors in a coherent manner around its national priorities in energy.

22. The objective of the energy policy of Seychelles (2010-2030) is to achieve 100 per cent reliance on renewable energy in the long term. The first step has been taken with the launch of the first large-scale windfarm on Mahé Island, in 2013. The windfarm in Port Victoria consists of eight turbines able to provide 6 MW (corresponding to 8% of Mahé Island's total energy capacity). The project, funded by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, was created to reduce oil imports, air pollution and carbon emissions and is estimated to provide electricity to more than 2,100 houses and reduce the consumption of fuel by about 1.6 million litres per year.

23. In 2014, the Government of Seychelles launched an innovative debt swap initiative in order to exchange a portion of its external debt for funding for coastal and marine-related conservation projects, in an effort to strengthen the island nation's resilience to climate change. The initiative was discussed with high-level representatives of the ministries of finance and environment of the governments of Belgium, France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the main bilateral creditors of Seychelles.

[4] See the compendium of inputs to the preparatory process, available from www.sids2014.org/index.php?menu=1533.

24. In 2014, Mauritius was selected to be a pilot country for the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, an initiative which involves four United Nations entities: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The initiative aims to provide a comprehensive suite of green economy services that will enable countries to transform national economic structures to meet the growing demands and challenges of the twenty-first century. Within this context, the steering committee of the "Maurice Ile Durable" initiative held a special meeting of the to discuss the development of a green economy action plan for Mauritius.

25. The implementation of the policy and strategy action plan for "Maurice Ile Durable" was made public in 2013 and approved by the commission for the initiative in 2014. The plan is initially organized around five pillars: energy, environment, employment/economics, education and equity, to be implemented through 130 projects and/or activities in the short, medium and long terms to bring coherence and to enhance existing activities by introducing new ideas for better sustainable development.

26. At the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, during the sixth meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States, while reviewing the progress in implementation, it was noted that in the Caribbean region, progress had been made in the areas of climate change and sea-level rise, natural environment and disasters, waste management, health, coastal and marine, freshwater, energy and biodiversity resources while progress in implementation was less notable in transport and communication, science and technology, graduation from least developed country status, sustainable production and consumption, national and regional enabling environments, knowledge management, culture, science development and technology transfer, and national and international governance.

27. In the Pacific, some activities took the form of regional coordination or bilateral activities with agencies and development partners. The office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the Pacific Island Countries, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, for example, have been collaborating with various government agencies and non-governmental organizations in Vanuatu, in supporting community programmes on creating resilience and coping with climate change and natural disasters.

28. At the community level, the office of UNICEF for the Pacific Island Countries, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in Tuvalu and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia established a joint initiative on achieving education for all in Tuvalu, which commenced in 2012 and will end in 2015, with a focus on equity that has led to innovations such as school grants and overall increased efficiency and effectiveness in the education system and greater ownership by all key stakeholders.

29. UNEP is working with the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Lami Town Council to design and implement an ecosystem-based adaptation

strategy for the coastal town of Lami in Fiji. The work encompassed vulnerability assessment and the analysis of costs and benefits of a range of adaptation options available to the town, comparing ecosystem-based approaches, such as mangrove restoration, to engineering-based approaches, such as building a sea wall.

30. The tenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, jointly organized by the Ministry of Health of Samoa, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the World Health Organization was convened from 2 to 4 July 2013 in Apia. Representatives identified many actions in continuing pursuit of the goal of "Healthy Islands", such as declaring a goal of a tobacco-free Pacific and developing regional and national multisectoral accountability mechanisms for addressing non-communicable diseases.

31. Acknowledging that fisheries are of fundamental importance to the Pacific Islands region, the Pacific Community welcomed a funding package for fisheries from Australia, in the amount of 9.6 million Australian dollars, which was pledged on 1 August 2014, at the forty-fifth Pacific Islands Forum, held in Palau. The funding, which will cover a four-year period, targets coastal fisheries development in particular. The Pacific Community plays a key role in scientific assessments of the status of both regional tuna stocks and the coastal fisheries of individual countries.

B. Development partners

32. Support for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy by the development partners has continued. The following activities by a sample of countries are a few examples of the progress that has been made by some of the development partners of the small island developing States over the past few years.

Japan

33. The sixth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting was held in Nago, Okinawa, Japan, on 25 and 26 May 2012. At this summit, under the slogan "We are Islanders — For Growing 'Kizuna' (Strong Bonds) in the Pacific", the leaders formulated five pillars for cooperation during the period from 2012 to 2015: (a) response to natural disasters; (b) environment and climate change; (c) sustainable development and human security; (d) people-to-people exchanges; and (e) maritime issues.

34. Japan also pledged grants to eight Caribbean countries (Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname) for a partnership between Japan and the Caribbean regarding climate change, in order to assist those countries in implementing pilot projects for developing climate change policies and promoting technology transfer in relation to mitigation and adaptation.

Mexico

35. Mexico, through its National Forestry Commission, contributed germ plasm for the reforestation programme of the microwatersheds of Kenscoff and Furcy in Haiti, in 2012.

36. The project for the strengthening of geospatial data infrastructure in the Caribbean was officially launched in April 2014, during the sixth Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Mérida, Mexico. The project aims to contribute to the development of a regional geospatial

infrastructure network, through diagnostics, capacity-building and the provision of equipment.

Morocco

37. In the context of the work of the small island developing States of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas region, Morocco has focused on educational support through scholarships and professionals have benefited from trainings in customs, transport, fisheries, security and journalism. Morocco has also provided cultural and technical cooperation on water cooperation initiatives.

38. In the Caribbean, Morocco has granted scholarships and trainings in such areas as health, agriculture, water and electricity, transport, trade and tourism.

39. In the Pacific, the areas in which Morocco participates in cooperation have mainly focused on technical cooperation in human rights, fishing, the phosphate industry and professional trainings.

New Zealand

40. In addressing renewable energy investment in small islands developing States of the Pacific, New Zealand and the European Union co-hosted the Pacific Energy Summit in March 2013. The Pacific Energy Summit was the catalyst for the expansion of New Zealand's renewable energy programme for the Pacific.

41. New Zealand is also expanding its cooperation with the Caribbean, Latin America and Africa, with a view to providing technical assistance in renewable energy.

Russian Federation

42. The Russian Federation is increasing its technical, financial and in-kind assistance to small island developing States. This includes the implementation of projects aimed at enhancing the national capacity of those States in such areas as social and economic development, modernization of physical infrastructure, public administration, education, health, culture and sport, and post-disaster recovery.

43. Cooperation in the field of education is also being strengthened. Plans have been agreed to admit 20 diplomats from the small island developing States of the Pacific to the advanced training courses at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

United Arab Emirates

44. The United Arab Emirates hosted the first Blue Economy Summit, a ministerial conference, on 19 and 20 January 2014, during Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week. The goal of the meeting was to discuss how to utilize the blue economy as a tool to shift development in small island developing States and coastal states towards a sustainable development trajectory, building on the consensus of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It was an important milestone in identifying the appropriate policy frameworks to support the shift of small island developing States and coastal regions towards sustainable development.

European Union

45. The European Union and New Zealand hosted a Pacific Energy Summit in 2013, with co-sponsorship from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Australian Agency for International Development. The summit provided a forum for leaders from Pacific Island countries to present their energy plans and targets and to seek donor and private sector support.

46. In February 2013, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community announced it was implementing a project with funding from the European Union, regarding improving key services to agriculture in Fiji, in order to cushion the economic and social impacts of restructuring Fiji's sugar sector. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community will assist sugar farmers in employing land that is currently underutilized. Additionally, in the same month, the Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa launched a revamped web-based platform on financing for sustainable land management. The website will support the exchange of information on funding and finance for sustainable land management among African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, many of which are also small island developing States.

47. In May 2013, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme announced that it had signed a contribution agreement to the value of €7.85 million with the European Union to address hazardous waste issues in the Pacific region. Activities covered under the agreement will focus on electronic, medical and asbestos waste. Also in May 2013, the European Union reported that it had surpassed its fast-start finance pledge to developing countries by providing over €7.3 billion (approximately $9.5 billion) in climate finance.

C. United Nations system

48. The United Nations system has implemented many activities towards the further implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, some examples of which are outlined below.

49. Small island developing States have highlighted the need to have their specific characteristics, emergencies and challenges considered, their eligibility for international aid assessed and their statistical system for data collection and monitoring strengthened. In that regard, the three main publications of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs relating to small island developing States illustrate the relevant issues from different perspectives. The 2014 edition of the *World Statistics Pocketbook* provides a compilation of basic social, economic and environmental indicators that together comprise a framework for assessing, in quantitative terms, each State's current development situation. "Trends in sustainable development: small island developing States" for 2014 highlights the vulnerabilities of small island developing States and recent trends and progress made in their sustainable development. A wallchart on population and development in small island developing States, updated for 2014, presents the latest data available on 16 indicators of demographic, environmental and economic characteristics of the populations of small island developing States and will be distributed as a contribution to the third International Conference.

50. The analytical framework for vulnerability-resilience profiles has been developed by the Small Island Developing States unit of Department of Economic and Social Affairs through expert consultations, under the umbrella of the "Islands" project of the Indian Ocean Commission, which is funded by the European Union. In 2014, Seychelles and Mauritius became the first countries to pilot vulnerability-resilience profiles, a policy tool for monitoring and assessing progress in addressing the vulnerabilities of small island developing States on the basis of a five-step methodology that starts with undertaking baseline studies and leads to countries developing their own vulnerability-resilience profiles.

51. In an attempt to address the vulnerabilities and development needs of small island developing States more effectively, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has conducted policy-focused research and analysis on resilience-building to reduce structural handicaps, enhance economic specialization, provide advisory services on issues relating to multilateral trade and the graduation of small island developing States from least developed country status, and eventually enhance the credibility of small island developing States as a platform for special consideration by development partners.

52. An online master's degree on sustainable development for small island developing States, developed jointly by members of the University Consortium of Small Island States, was launched in 2014. The collaboration was facilitated by Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with a contribution from Spain. Building on this success, members have developed a joint research programme, which is registered on the Partnerships Platform for the third International Conference.

53. A partnership to establish a network of regional centres for renewable energy and energy efficiency in small island developing States was signed in 2014 by the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria and UNIDO. The Government of Austria has committed to fund the establishment and the first operational phase for renewable energy and energy efficiency centres in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, and to provide support to the African islands through the centre for renewable energy and energy efficiency of the Economic Community of West African States. The partnership focuses on assisting in the promotion of renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency.

54. The World Trade Organization and the Government of France co-organized a conference on sustainable tourism development in islands, held from 11 to 13 September 2013, in Réunion, France, to address competitiveness, sustainability, specific challenges and vulnerabilities and examples of relevant actions. The conference aimed to address a range of relevant issues for island destinations, from the competitiveness and sustainability perspectives, identifying specific challenges and vulnerabilities and examples of relevant actions. The conclusions from the conference are expected to serve as guidance to national tourism authorities and relevant destinations as well as to the international community as an input to the third International Conference.

55. In 2014, UNDP launched a report, entitled "Financing recovery for resilience: enhancing the coverage, capitalization and coherence of pooled financing mechanisms for recovery to strengthen synergies between humanitarian, development and climate finance", prepared by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. The report emphasizes that

the three sources of funding (humanitarian, development and climate finance) are sometimes provided to fragile and conflict-affected countries independently of each other, thus reducing their effectiveness and increasing risks of financing gaps.

56. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, together with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs organized an expert group meeting on the significance of marine science and technology for small island developing States and the importance of the transfer of marine technology to small island developing States to support sustainable development", which was held in May 2014.

57. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has supported projects in the different regions, aiming to reduce poverty and enhance food security through, for example, an initiative for livestock family farming in the Caribbean and the "Farmer Field School" experience in Saint Lucia. Another project that focused on the small island developing States of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas region and the Pacific region sought to achieve sustainable and efficient tuna fisheries production and biodiversity conservation with an ecosystem approach.

58. In April 2014, UNEP launched its project on building capacity for coastal ecosystem-based adaptation in small island developing States. The project will assist African and Caribbean small island developing States in developing and applying innovative approaches for ecosystem-based adaptation in order to maintain the resilience of tropical coastal ecosystems to climate change, ensuring long-term ecosystem services and reduced vulnerability of coastal communities.

59. The office of UNICEF for the Pacific Island Countries has been supporting Pacific countries to ensure that in each country, there is expanded access to improved water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in rural and peri-urban communities and schools; improved policies, strategies, institutional capacity and donor coordination for water, sanitation and hygiene; expanded community-led approaches to sanitation, in order to eliminate open defecation; more support for emergency preparedness and response in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector, in line with the "Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action"; and helps provide effective leadership as regional water, sanitation and hygiene cluster coordinator during emergencies, through the humanitarian team for the Pacific.

60. The University of Ghent and UNESCO provided guidance in the management of natural resources in small island developing States by convening a workshop on remote sensing, for government officials and academics from Barbados, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, which was held in Jamaica in 2013. This was the first phase of a new project designed to establish collaboration between Caribbean governments and universities with space agencies to promote remote sensing for environmental management.

61. The Governments of Cabo Verde and of Sao Tome and Principe, in close cooperation with UNESCO, are working to enhance education on issues relating to water, at the school level, by revising formal curricula and developing pedagogical materials and training for teachers. In this regard, Cabo Verde will also be the

beneficiary, in upcoming months, of a project that will supply safe drinking water to three schools.

62. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has updated its directory of Caribbean experts and organizations, with a view to strengthening the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme. The programme is a mechanism designed to strengthen inter- and intraregional cooperation between small island developing States through the exchange of knowledge and the utilization of expertise.

63. On 13 June 2014, the World Bank convened a high-level dialogue on advancing sustainable development in small island developing States. The event was viewed as a preparatory event for the third International Conference. It touched on areas of interest to small island developing States, including building resilience and inclusive growth and such emerging challenges and opportunities as oceans management, sustainable energy, climate change, human and social development and macroeconomic challenges. The discussions will inform the joint side event on debt, co-organized by the World Bank with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to be held during the third International Conference.

D. Intergovernmental organizations

The Commonwealth

64. In 2013, the Commonwealth outlined its strategic plan for the period 2013-2017 and included among its objectives the strengthening of the resilience of its small States and vulnerable States, the majority of which are small island developing States. This commitment to supporting the small island developing States among its members will focus on advocating for international policies, mechanisms and rules that are more responsive to their development strategies and resilience needs. The programme of work will seek to:

(a) Develop a revised resilience index and framework that can be used by the international community to support investments and financing to build resilience in small States;

(b) Develop proposals for improved financing for development in small States, working with key international and regional organizations;

(c) Support the efforts of member States to achieve sustainable development.

65. Activities in these areas include research on building resilience in small island developing States; solutions to the debt challenges faced by those States; ocean governance; climate financing and other innovative sources of financing; trade as an engine for growth; and data challenges. The research underpins a programme of advocacy based on distilling the key messages at major international meetings and/or conferences and during conferences convened by the Commonwealth to bring together small island developing States and key development partners. These are further disseminated through various methods of communication, including publications.

Indian Ocean Commission

66. Phase 1 of the "Islands" project, with funding from the European Union, was completed in June 2014. The project has resulted in several concrete outcomes at the national and subregional level, which included: (a) the development of vulnerability-resilience profiles, which will eventually be highlighted through various media, including the website of the Small Island Developing States Network; (b) the setting up of a regional facility for coral reefs and associated ecosystems in the Indian Ocean region; (c) capacity-building for risk financing, adapted to the region, and the setting up of identified mechanisms; (d) strengthening the institutionalization of tools to support processes and governance for national sustainable development strategies; and (e) awareness-raising, communication and educational activities to promote sustainable development in the region. Phase 2 is to start in August 2014 and is projected to be implemented over 18 months.

III. International Year of Small Island Developing States

67. The year 2014 was declared the International Year of Small Island Developing States by the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/206. The resolution encouraged all Member States, the United Nations system and all other stakeholders to take advantage of the Year to promote actions at all levels, including through international, regional and subregional cooperation, as appropriate, aimed at the achievement of sustainable development of small island developing States. The theme of the International Year is unprecedented, with its focus specifically on a group of Member States.

68. Many events and activities have occurred during the International Year. Those list of events highlighted in the present report is not exhaustive.

A. International events

69. The International Year of Small Island Developing States was launched in February 2014 under the auspices of the General Assembly, prior to the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the third International Conference. The opening ceremony highlighted cultural performances from small island developing States in all three regions.

70. The Alliance of Small Island States has designated three champions for the International Year, representing the three regions of small island developing States, in order to help promote the Year.

71. The United Nations proclaimed 22 May as the International Day for Biological Diversity, with the aim of increasing understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues (see General Assembly resolution 55/201). The theme for 2014 was "Island Biodiversity". The theme coincided with the International Year of Small Island Developing States by highlighting the importance of biodiversity protection and sustainable livelihoods for small island developing States. The celebration of the International Day in 2014 was supported by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and by the Global Island Partnership.

72. World Environment Day was celebrated on 5 June 2014, in collaboration with UNEP. The theme of the day was "Raise your voice, not the sea level". Events organized to mark the Day included clean-up campaigns, walk-to-work days, plastic purges, art exhibits, tree-planting drives, concerts, dance recitals, switching off lights, recycling drives, social media campaigns and different contests on a global scale, in keeping with the celebrations for the International Year of Small Island Developing States.

73. In addition to World Environment Day, World Oceans Day was celebrated on 8 June 2014. The first World Oceans Day photography contest was held and results were announced on 9 June 2014. The celebration for the year 2014 also marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

74. An exhibit on the International Year of Small Island Developing States will be held at the third International Conference, in Apia, and will feature exhibitions of photographs of UNESCO World Heritage sites found in small island developing States and artistic display of stamps from all small island developing States, among other displays.

B. Regional events

Caribbean launch

75. The International Year of Small Island Developing States was launched at the Caribbean regional level on 24 April 2014, in Kingston, at the initiative of ECLAC, in a ceremony that was co-hosted by UNDP and the Government of Jamaica. The launch featured performances by dance troupes, drummers and the steel pan ensemble of the University of the West Indies, as well as poetry reading. The launch was a celebration of the achievements of the small island developing States in the Caribbean and showcased the cultural talents of their inhabitants.

Fifth Melanesian Festival of Arts and Culture

76. As a contribution to the celebrations of the International Year, the secretariat of the Melanesian Spearhead Group organized a series of events, held from 30 June to 3 July 2014, in Port Moresby. The events formed part of the fifth Melanesian Festival of Arts and Culture, on the theme of celebrating cultural diversity. With support from UNESCO, the Pacific Islands Museum Association organized a workshop for Melanesian museums, on the topic of fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects, which was held on 7 and 8 July 2014 at the National Museum and Art Gallery of Papua New Guinea, in Port Moresby.

C. National and local events

77. On 28 April 2014, Sao Tome and Principe hosted a workshop on strengthening water education at the school level, organized by UNESCO, while Singapore supported "Eco Action Day" on 5 June, to coincide with World Environment Day.

78. In Seychelles, those taking part in the fourth international carnival of Victoria, held on 21 April 2014, were dressed in the national or traditional costumes of each small island developing State. Different network groups for small island developing

States, such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme supported the event through information-sharing and creating channels of communication among small island developing States.

79. In Barbados, the celebration of the International Year was the focus of the country's annual celebrations of Environment Month in June and was designed to bring issues concerning the oceans and land degradation into focus. The event prompted discussions towards promoting sustainable development in education and streamlining sustainable development into the school curriculum, particularly at the secondary level.

IV. Preparations for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States

A. Work of the Preparatory Committee

80. The main activity of the General Assembly, at its sixty-eighth session, with respect to the implementation of the sustainable development of small island developing States, has been the preparations for the third International Conference. The Conference is important for both small island developing States and the United Nations, as it will seek a renewed political commitment to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States. It is expected to result in a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented document and serve as a forum to build on existing successful partnerships and launch innovative and concrete new partnerships.

81. The General Assembly, in its resolution 68/238, called for the establishment of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. It also decided that there would be two meetings of the Preparatory Committee and one intersessional meeting to prepare for the Conference.

82. The main tasks of the Preparatory Committee were:

(a) To discuss the objectives and substantive theme of the Conference and organizational and procedural matters, including the rules of procedure, and to elect the members of the Bureau;

(b) To finalize the preparatory work for the Conference, including the outcome document;

(c) To discuss the thematic areas of the outcome document of the Conference.

83. The Preparatory Committee held discussions on (a) accreditation of non-governmental organizations; (b) the rules of procedure for the Conference; (c) the multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues; (d) side events and pre-conference activities; and (e) the outcome document.

Partnerships

84. The multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues at the Conference are to be clustered into six thematic areas, namely, sustainable economic development; climate change and disaster risk management; social development in small island developing States, health and non-communicable diseases, youth and women; sustainable energy; oceans, seas and biodiversity, both marine and on land; and water and sanitation, food security and waste management. It was agreed that the dialogues would run in parallel to the plenary at the Conference.

85. It was also agreed that "smart" criteria would be used for selecting partnerships for the multi-stakeholder partnerships dialogues. Smart criteria in this context are defined as: specific to small island developing States; measurable and monitorable; achievable and accountable; resource-based and results-focused; with timelines for implementation and transparency by all parties.

Side events

86. With respect to side events, over 100 requests for side events had been received as at 1 July 2014. Several pre-conference activities were planned including a youth forum, a major groups forum, a renewable energy event and a private sector forum.

Outcome document

87. The Preparatory Committee also negotiated the draft outcome document, entitled "Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (Samoa Pathway)" (see A/CONF.223/3, annex). The document addresses the following issues:

(a) Sustained and sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth with decent work for all

(i) Development models in small island developing States for the implementation of sustainable development and poverty eradication

(ii) Sustainable tourism

(b) Climate change

(c) Sustainable energy

(d) Disaster risk reduction

(e) Oceans and seas

(f) Food security and nutrition

(g) Water and sanitation

(h) Sustainable transportation

(i) Sustainable consumption and production

(j) Management of chemicals and waste, including hazardous waste

(k) Health and non-communicable diseases

(l) Gender equality and women's empowerment

(m) Social development

(i) Culture and sport

(ii) Promoting peaceful societies and safe communities

(iii) Education

(n) Biodiversity

(i) Desertification, land degradation and drought

(ii) Forests

(o) Invasive alien species

(p) Means of implementation, including partnerships

(i) Partnerships

(ii) Financing

(iii) Trade

(iv) Capacity-building

(v) Technology

(vi) Data and statistics

(vii) Institutional support for small island developing States

(q) Priorities of the small island developing States for the post-2015 development agenda

(r) Monitoring and accountability

B. Pre-conference activities

Renewable energy forum

88. With energy costs and dependence on imported fossil fuels acknowledged as challenges for small island developing States, the renewable energy forum will take place with the objective of identifying strategies to transform island energy sectors through partnerships.

Private sector partnerships forum

89. It is envisaged that the private sector partnerships forum, to be convened in Apia, will provide a platform upon which genuine and durable partnerships to support the sustainable development of small island developing States can be announced, particularly in relation to six thematic areas and sectors. The forum will also facilitate interaction between senior leaders from business and government, in order to enhance private sector partnerships for small island developing States and facilitate the sharing of information and best practices within those States regarding policies, programmes and practices geared towards strengthening business and industry in the pursuit of sustainable development.

90. The expected outcomes of the forum include: rejuvenating commitments and enhancing partnerships of national and regional private sector stakeholders in the small island developing States, Governments and the international community in

order to enhance the private sector's contribution to sustainable development for those States; the identification of the priority concrete actions for the private sector in those States, including partnerships to be announced at the third International Conference; interaction between senior business leaders (national and international) and leaders of small island developing States regarding the way forward to enhance the role of the private sector in those States and fostering private sector partnerships; and discussions on the establishment of a global business leaders network in that regard.

C. Role of the major groups

91. Small islands developing States are well represented among the major groups and other stakeholders. These organizations have been engaged in the field on issues concerning water, biodiversity, climate change and communicable diseases, to name but a few, for many years, in an effort to protect the small island developing States from the vulnerabilities they face and find ways to integrate sustainable development processes into governmental and non-governmental practices. Understanding the critical role of major groups and other stakeholders in the region, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made a particular effort to ensure that the Conference would be an opportunity to engage on such issues at an international level.

92. In order to support the inclusion of civil society in these intergovernmental processes, the major groups and other stakeholders programme created a steering committee, which would not only uphold the principles of self-organization, transparency and accountability, but share their regional expertise so as to ensure that all the activities planned would be relevant and would enable them to participate to the extent possible. The steering committee was comprised of representatives from the nine major groups, as well as two representatives from each of the three small island developing State regions.

93. The steering committee is tasked with the following:

(a) Providing guidance in the organization of the major groups and other stakeholders pre-Conference forum, including nomination of speakers and plan of work;

(b) Facilitating outreach in each of the small island developing State regions, in addition to all nine major group constituencies;

(c) Facilitating engagement in the preparatory meetings and the Conference;

(d) Helping to facilitate joint advocacy and development of positions.

94. A major groups and other stakeholders pre-conference forum will be held on 29 August 2014 and will serve as a capacity-building forum, welcome new regional participants to the process and also enable experienced civil society leaders to share their experiences and share knowledge. The steering committee's work, particularly in the agenda-setting process for the pre-conference forum, has focused much attention on the partnerships, and major groups are also engaged with other pre-conference activities.

V. Situating small island developing States in the broader sustainable development landscape

95. At the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Member States will focus on the initial implementation of the outcome of the third International Conference, while preparing for the post-2015 development agenda.

96. At its sixty-eighth session, the General Assembly considered many issues of relevance to the preparations for the third International Conference and the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In addition, the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals agreed on a proposal for sustainable development goals, which included several goals and targets for which Member States from among the small island developing States had strongly advocated, and the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council provided small island developing States with a forum for discussion on issues of critical importance. Upon successfully concluding its deliberations on 19 July 2014, the Open Working Group agreed by acclamation to submit its report to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, for consideration and appropriate action.

97. Those activities, which were mandated by the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, have allowed for considerable attention to the sustainable development challenges of small island developing States and discussion on strategies to address those challenges.

A. High-level political forum on sustainable development

98. In relation to bringing the issues of concern to small island developing States into the wider sustainable development debate of the international community, the resolution of the General Assembly on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (resolution 67/290) identifies the sustainable development challenges facing the world's most vulnerable countries as a priority for the forum. The resolution stipulates that "the meetings of the forum shall devote adequate time to the discussion of the sustainable development challenges facing developing countries, including the most vulnerable countries, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and African countries, with the aim of enhancing engagement and implementing commitments".

99. Pursuant to those provisions of the resolution, the high-level political forum convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, held a special session on small island developing States during its 2014 meeting. The overall theme of the meeting was "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and charting the way for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals". The segment on the small island developing States had as its theme "Island voices, global choices: promoting genuine and durable partnerships".

100. The discussion focused on the resilience of small island developing States and addressing their unique challenges in the post-2015 development agenda, the role of genuine and durable partnerships in the sustainable development of those States, the

implementation of the outcome of the third International Conference, and the support of the United Nations system to small island developing States. Delegates included the Minister of Finance of Cabo Verde, the special envoy of the Prime Minister of New Zealand and representatives from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the University Consortium of Small Island States, and respondents included the Government of Samoa and a representative of the major groups.

101. The discussion within the high-level political forum on issues relating to small island developing States helped to bring those issues into the wider sustainable development discussion and to pave the way for the preparations of the third International Conference and the consideration of such issues within the broader discourse on the post-2015 development agenda.

B. Small island developing States and the sustainable development goals

102. Issues of concern to small island developing States were also being considered within the wider discussion on sustainable development goals. It was understood that, while the sustainable development goals would address the concerns of all States in the international community, the special case of small island developing States would also have to be considered.

103. The nexus of climate, land, energy, water and development was one area in which the needs and concerns of small island developing States were expressed. It was noted that, in some small island developing States, the impact of a changing climate had already become a reality, with respect to land, energy, and water in particular.

104. The case study on Mauritius in the prototype of a global sustainable development report helped to highlight the challenges that small island developing States face, as well as the opportunities that are available through an integrated approach to sustainable development. The study also showed how the reality for small island developing States could become a global reality.[5]

105. While all sustainable development goals were of high importance to small island developing States, the goals addressing climate change and oceans, seas and marine resources, had been viewed as essential issues for many small island developing States. The fact that the sustainable development goal process addressed the concerns of those States reflects a global consideration for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the outcome of the third International Conference within the post-2015 development agenda.

[5] For more information, see the report of the Secretary-General on the options for the scope and methodology for a global sustainable development report (E/2014/87) and the prototype global sustainable development report, which is available from http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1621.

VI. Conclusion

106. The sustainable development of small island developing States remains an important consideration for the international community and the United Nations system. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the special case of small island developing States, and the preparatory process for the third International Conference has highlighted many of the challenges that are faced by these countries. However, those States also have the opportunity to address these challenges and pursue sustainable development in the post-2015 development agenda. The third International Conference and its outcome will facilitate that process.

107. The draft outcome document of the third International Conference sets out actions to be pursued by both Member States and the United Nations system during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, which could contribute to the implementation of the outcome of the Conference. The deliberations at the sixty-ninth session and those on the post-2015 development agenda have the potential to become important opportunities for addressing the priorities of small island developing States, as they transition towards a more sustainable future.

108. A more comprehensive strategy towards the sustainable development of small island developing States, through genuine and durable partnership, will be considered within the context of the implementation of the outcome of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.